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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE
ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP

CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC
AMERICAN CAUCUS, *CHAIR EMERITUS*

LGBT EQUALITY CAUCUS, *VICE CHAIR*

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce
Committee
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green:

I write to express my support for the amendment offered by my friend and colleague, Tony Cárdenas, on lifting the federal ban on gun violence research. This amendment offered is in fact my bill, The Gun Violence Research Act (H.R. 3926), of which Representative Cárdenas is an original cosponsor. This bill would give CDC the authority to research the causes, mechanisms, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of injuries with respect to gun violence.

The recent massacre in Orlando's Pulse nightclub is yet another tragic, harrowing reminder that our nation needs to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the causes of gun violence so that we can identify and treat those prone to committing mass shootings, thereby prevent mass shootings from occurring. Currently, the CDC is not permitted to conduct any studies into potential medical and health causes for increased gun violence in our nation.

In Silicon Valley, we recognize the power of research. My bill – this amendment – seeks to bring this data-driven approach to the public sphere so that we may develop a more pointed strategy to understand and ultimately better address the public health crisis of gun violence. It is my hope that by conducting research into the causes of gun violence, we can better identify warning signs, address any loopholes in oversight, and get people who are prone to gun violence the assistance they need. How many times must we bury our loved ones from senseless acts of gun violence before we pass commonsense legislation to understand the problem our society is facing?

In the U.S., thirty-six people die from gun violence every day. *Every. Day.* An average of 112 people are either killed or injured by gun violence over any given 24-hour period. The impact of gun violence is exponential – as one bullet destroys more than one life – it destroys families, entire communities.

From Columbine to Sandy Hook; from the theatre in Aurora to the nightclub in Orlando – enough is enough. By Sunday morning, the world woke up to the heart-wrenching reality of the massacre in Orlando. What is less known is that on this massacre was one of 43 shootings on Sunday. Those shootings resulted in an additional 18 deaths and 41 injuries. At least five of those killed were children.

Our nation doesn't need more moments of prayers; we need action. We need a foundation of critical insight and information on the trends and causes of gun violence, which would help us better identify warning signs, address any loopholes in oversight, and get people who are prone to gun violence the assistance they need.

Furthermore, this bill is endorsed by various organizations, including the following which have submitted their support.

"Gun violence continues to devastate communities throughout the nation. In counties such as Alameda and cities like Oakland, Ca., the rate at which our citizens - often young people, teens and babies - lose their lives is intolerable and truly represents a public health crisis. We are also just beginning to understand the long-term and crushing effects of the trauma inflicted upon children and families whose lives are forever altered by gun violence. It is vitally important that the CDC be able to study gun violence and its repercussions in order to combat this epidemic in a meaningful and smart way. As a law enforcement leader in a county too often shattered by gunfire, I stand with Congressman Honda, a strong leader working to keep our streets and families safe, in supporting the Gun Violence Research Act. - **Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley**


"When the cause of death is the same for 32,000 people every year, that's a public health crisis that demands attention. That's why it is so important that the Centers for Disease Control study gun violence causes, effects and solutions. If this were any other issue — food poisoning, seat belts, anything else — this would be a non-issue, which speaks to the corporate gun lobby's stranglehold on Washington. Congressman Honda is listening to the voices of Americans who have had enough. Further, we applaud Rep. Honda's effort to keep the gun lobby out of the exam room and protect the rights of doctors and patients to have an open and honest conversation about gun safety. Every day across our nation, lives are lost because of irresponsible gun ownership, including children who are shot unintentionally or take their own lives, most often with a parent's gun. Anyone who seeks to prevent doctors from having this conversation is simply putting other motives ahead of public health and safety." – **Dan Gross, President of Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence**

"With over 100,000 Americans shot every year, it's clear that gun violence is a major public health crisis. It's shameful that the gun lobby has been able to block research into the trends and causes of shootings in America. We need to reinstate the CDC's ability to study the connection between gun violence and gun ownership and bring more credible, nonpartisan data into the conversation about gun safety. The Law Center is proud to support Congressman Honda's Gun Violence Research Act." - **Robyn Thomas, Executive Director of the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence**

"Representative Honda's Gun Violence Research Act is a smart and balanced approach to addressing the gun gag rules that too often tie the hands of researchers and silence doctors. Nothing about this bill should be divisive or controversial. It's a common sense way to improve research, data collection, and public health without resorting to the extremes of the gun debates or villainizing guns and the law-abiding Americans who own them." – **Sarah Trumble, Senior Policy Counsel at Third Way**

We must have a stronger, deeper understanding of gun violence and equip our society with the knowledge need to more adequately address this epidemic. I thank my good friend, Representative Cárdenas, for offering this critical amendment, and I urge your support of this life-saving amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael M. Honda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress